1 2 3 4 5 6	Timothy J. Conway, OSB No. 851752 (Lead At Direct Dial: (503) 802-2027 Facsimile: (503) 972-3727 Email: tim.conway@tonkon.com Ava L. Schoen, OSB No. 044072 Direct Dial: (503) 802-2143 Facsimile: (503) 972-3843 Email: ava.schoen@tonkon.com TONKON TORP LLP 888 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1600 Portland, OR 97204-2099	torney)			
7	Attorneys for Debtor B. & J. Property Investments, Inc.				
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9					
10	UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT				
11	DISTRICT OF OREGON				
12	In re	Case No. 19-60138-pcm11			
13	B. & J. Property Investments, Inc.	LEAD CASE			
14	Debtor.	Jointly Administered With Case No. 19-60230-pcm11			
15		B. & J. PROPERTY INVESTMENTS,			
16	In re	INC.'S OBJECTION TO MOTION AND MEMORANDUM FOR CLASS			
17	William J. Berman,	CERTIFICATION OF HATHAWAY CLASS ACTION CREDITORS			
18	Debtor.				
19					
20	B. & J. Property Investments, Inc. ("B. & J." or "Debtor") objects to the				
21	Motion and Memorandum for Class Certification of <i>Hathaway</i> Class Action Creditors [ECF				
22	No. 284] (the "Motion") filed by the Ad Hoc Group of Class Plaintiffs (the "Hathaway				
23	Attorneys") and, in support of this objection, B. & J. states as follows:				
24	INTRODUCTION				
25	The Hathaway Attorneys have failed to follow the correct prerequisites to				
26	seeking class certification. First, a party must st	•			
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proceeding to which it wishes the motion to apply. Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9014. There is no general class action approval in bankruptcy court. Rather, the bankruptcy court determines the request on a case-by-case basis for each contested matter or adversary proceeding in which class certification is sought. Second, once a contested matter or adversary proceeding is identified, the court then weighs whether or not it will exercise its discretion under Bankruptcy Rule 9014 to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023. Third, if, and only if, the court determines that it will exercise its discretion to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023 to a contested matter should the court then proceed to analyze the FRCP 23 factors as to that particular matter. *In re TWL Corp.*, 712 F.3d 886, 892–93 (5th Cir. 2013). Given the nature of bankruptcy cases, the court may determine that it is appropriate to grant class action status in some contested matters or adversary proceedings and not in others. Each matter is determined independently.

Contrary to that process, the Hathaway Attorneys' Motion seeks blanket class

Contrary to that process, the Hathaway Attorneys' Motion seeks blanket class certification for multiple, unspecified contested matters that do not currently exist.

Bankruptcy Rule 9014, subject to the Court's discretion, expressly limits the application of Bankruptcy Rule 7023 (and, in turn, Rule 23) to "a particular matter." Here, however, the Hathaway Attorneys have identified no particular contested matter. To the extent the Hathaway Attorneys seek class certification, they must identify the particular contested matter and ask the Court to exercise its discretion as it relates to that particular contested matter. The Hathaway Attorneys fail to even reference Bankruptcy Rule 9014 at all or explain why the Court should exercise its discretion to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023 to any contested matter. If the Hathaway Attorneys identify a particular contested matter for which they seek class certification, and to the extent the Court exercises its authority to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023, Debtor reserves its right to conduct discovery and file briefing as to the elements of Rule 23 at that time. However, as of now the court must deny the Motion as

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1	it fails to identify a specific contested matter and fails to cite any supporting authority or			
2	discuss the relevant considerations. ¹			
3	BACKGROUND			
4	I. Bankruptcy Cases			
5	1. On January 17, 2019, B. & J. filed a voluntary petition for relief under			
6	Chapter 11 of Title 11 the United States Bankruptcy Code (the "B. & J. Case").			
7	2. On January 28, 2019, Berman filed a voluntary petition for relief under			
8	Chapter 11 of Title 11 the United States Bankruptcy Code (the "Berman Case").			
9	3. Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. §§ 1107 and 1108, prior to confirmation,			
10	Debtors continued to operate their businesses and manage their property as Debtors-in-			
11	Possession.			
12	4. On June 28, 2019, the Court entered an Order Directing Joint			
13	Administration of Chapter 11 Cases, [ECF No. 74], procedurally consolidating and jointly			
14	administering the B. & J. Case and the Berman Case.			
15	5. On January 18, 2019, B. & J. filed and served its Notice of Debtor's			
16	Intent to Reject Commercial Lease and Authorize Use and Operation of Property as RV Park			
17	and Self-Storage Facility [ECF No. 10] on all creditors and all parties as listed on the Court's			
18	records (the "Court Mailing Matrix"), which included all 279 individuals who received a			
19	General Judgment (the "Judgment Creditors") in the Marion County Circuit Court class			
20	action case, Case No. 13C14321 ("Marion County Case") against B. & J., Berman, and			
21	Better Business Management, Inc.			
22	6. On January 22, 2019, the Court filed the Notice of Chapter 11			
23	Bankruptcy Case [ECF No. 34], which set March 28, 2019 as the deadline for filing proofs of			
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25	¹ The Motion specifically identifies the nondischargeability adversary proceeding in <i>In re: Berman</i> as one potentially applicable matter. However, if the Motion was intended to apply			
26	to that adversary proceeding, then it should have been filed there, not in the main case.			
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case." Id. at 5.

B. & J. PROPERTY INVESTMENTS, INC.'S OBJECTION TO MOTION AND MEMORANDUM FOR CLASS CERTIFICATION OF HATHAWAY CLASS

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ACTION CREDITORS

whether a class should be certified. Here, the Hathaway Attorneys have identified no particular contested matter for the Court's consideration. In turn, the Court should deny the Motion at the first step because it has no contested matter before it such that it can decide whether to exercise its discretion under Bankruptcy Rule 9014 (before even reaching the traditional Rule 23 factors).

I. Hathaway Attorneys' Attempt to Skip a Step Dooms the Motion

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"In a contested matter, the party seeking to rely on Rule 23 must file a motion under Rule 9014." In re Dynegy, 770 F.3d at 1069 (emphasis added); Mortland v. Aughney, No. C 11-00743 WHA, 2011 WL 2653515, at *1 (N.D. Cal. July 6, 2011) (holding bankruptcy court did not err in exercising its discretion not to apply Rule 7023 because the failure of appellants to move the bankruptcy court pursuant to Rule 9014 was dispositive). Failure to file such a motion or cite to the applicable bankruptcy rule is itself grounds for denying the Motion. See In re Dynegy, 770 F.3d at 1069 (purported class representative "did not follow these procedures and thus cannot assert a right to represent a class. His failure to initiate class proceedings in compliance with the proper bankruptcy procedures, despite having had more than two months to comply with the rules, rendered [him] unable to represent a class that had never been designated by the Bankruptcy Court, much less assume the role of representative of such an undesignated class"); Reid v. White Motor Corp., 886 F.2d 1462 (6th Cir. 1989) (party who failed to timely petition the bankruptcy court to apply the provisions of Rule 9014 and Rule 7023 ignored a mandatory requirement essential to filing a class claim in bankruptcy court and could not receive class certification). See also Mull v. Motion Picture Indus. Health Plan, No. LA CV 12-06693-VBF, 2019 WL 6655389, at *1 (C.D. Cal. July 12, 2019) (failure to cite on-point local rule or demonstrate why the movant met the rule's standard enough to deny motion); Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church v. Church Mut. Ins. Co., No. CV 04-1700-PHX-SMM, 2006 WL 8440615, at *2 (D. Ariz. Apr. 27, 2006) (same); Fed. R. Civ. P. 11(b)(2) ("By presenting to the court a

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pleading, written motion, or other paper * * * an attorney * * * certifies that to the best of the person's knowledge, information, and belief, formed after an inquiry reasonable under the circumstances: * * * (2) the claims, defenses, and other legal contentions are warranted by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for extending, modifying, or reversing existing law or for establishing new law.").

The Hathaway Attorneys did not file a Rule 9014 Motion. Instead, they assumed (incorrectly) that this jointly administered main bankruptcy case is an adversary proceeding, and filed the Motion as if Rule 23 automatically applies. It does not, and the Court should stop its analysis here and deny the Motion.

II. Hathaway Attorneys' Failure to Limit the Motion to a "Particular Matter" is Grounds for Denial

The Hathaway Attorneys do not cite any authority for certifying a class in an unknown number of unspecified contested matters at one time. To the contrary, Bankruptcy Rule 9014 provides that a court may apply Rule 7023 "in a particular matter;" not for an entire case. (Emphasis added.) Illustrating the plain meaning of the rule, when courts analyze whether to exercise their discretion and apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023, they do so one contested matter at a time. *See, e.g., In re Dynegy*, 770 F.3d at 1069 (plan objection); *In re Verity Health*, 2019 WL 2903269, at *4 (prepetition claims process).

The Hathaway Attorneys have not articulated why they are seeking class certification in the main case as opposed to the adversary proceeding. Yet they seek blanket class certification "regarding all issues in this bankruptcy proceeding." Motion at 2.

To the extent the Hathaway Attorneys seek wholesale class certification at this late date for all future contested matters, such a request is not only at odds with Bankruptcy Rule 9014, but would create uncertainty and risks upheaving implementation and interpretation of the confirmed plan. For example, Debtors' confirmed plan does not treat any group of creditors as a certified class. Likewise, the plan sets out when an event of

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Indeed, if the Court granted the relief sought by this Motion, the Hathaway Attorneys could interject on behalf of hundreds creditors in every future contested matter, large or small, no matter how tangentially interested they are in that matter. That absurd result must be avoided.

For another example, the Hathaway Attorneys may even be attempting an impermissible end-run around Debtors' discharge pursuant to the Plan and Section 1141(d)(1) of the Bankruptcy Code. If successful, this would undermine the protections afforded to Debtors and all of the creditors who timely asserted claims under the Bankruptcy Code, "by permitting those who missed the bar date * * * to interpose claims." In re W.R. Grace & Co., 389 B.R. 373, 380 (Bankr. D. Del. 2008). Congress explicitly granted debtors a discharge of all debts through confirmation of a plan in Bankruptcy Code Section 1141(d)(1). See 11 U.S.C. §§ 524(a) and 1141 (discharging claims through the date of a confirmed plan). The discharge of debt is a fundamental benefit bestowed upon debtors by Congress. See River City Bank v. Mathis (In re Mathis), 465 B.R. 325, 335 (Bankr. N.D. Ga. 2012) (noting that absent a discharge, a debtor is denied "the most fundamental benefit of filing a bankruptcy case."); In re Brown, 163 B.R. 596, 598 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 1993) (stating that discharge is one of the "two key benefits" of bankruptcy). Allowing, without proper consideration, the Hathaway Attorneys to prosecute class prepetition claims, and perhaps even class administrative claims, would interfere with the uniform application of the

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confirmed plan.

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individual question is properly posed to the Court. Because the Motion lumps all future matters together—without citing to any authority for doing so—the Motion should be denied.
III. Even if the Court Were to Apply the Test as to Whether Bankruptcy Rule 7023
Should Be Applied Here, the Motion Should be Denied

bar dates by reinstating the discharged claims of purported class members who failed to

inside the walls of these bankruptcy cases. Rather than rush to conclude that the Hathaway

care and follow the bankruptcy rules' requirement to analyze whether to exercise its

discretion to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023 in each "particular matter" if and when the

Attorneys should represent an entire group of creditors for all purposes, the Court should take

The Hathaway Attorneys should not be allowed to slide such a Trojan horse

assert claims within the time limits applicable to similarly situated creditors under the

If the Court does not reject the Motion for the reasons set forth above, it still must exercise its discretion as to whether to even apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023 here. In general, the appropriate inquiry in deciding whether to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023 to a contested matter is whether class procedures are superior to non-class procedures with respect to the contested matter at issue. *In re Biery*, No. 10–23338, 2014 WL 1431947, at *6 (E.D. KY April 14, 2014). Here, it is impossible to know whether applying Bankruptcy Rule 7023 would be superior because the Hathaway Attorneys fail to identify any contested matter for which they seek class certification.

Moreover, were the Court to use its discretion to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023 at this time, the parties and the Court would then need to undertake the process of determining whether the elements of Rule 23 have been met such that a class should be certified. That process could require discovery and an evidentiary hearing with respect to each of the Rule 23 elements for each "particular matter" for which class certification is requested. Again, this process would be all the more difficult because the Hathaway

Attorneys have not identified what contested matters are at issue. In any circumstance, this 1 2 pre-certification process would cause delay, create uncertainty, and cost the estate funds it 3 does not have. Such a result is clearly not superior at this late date. IV. The Rule 23 Factors Will Not Be Satisfied 4 5 An analysis of the Rule 23 factors is not appropriate at this time for the reasons set forth above. Debtors expressly reserve their rights to address each of the Rule 23 6 7 factors if and when a contested matter is identified and the Court elects to exercise its 8 discretion to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023, and in turn Rule 23, to that proceeding. 9 That said, the Court should be aware that the allegations with respect to 10 Debtors' purported conduct at the time of plan balloting, as set out in the Motion, is not only 11 false but irrelevant given that Debtors' plan has already been confirmed. Moreover, the 12 Hathaway Attorneys' conclusion that each of the Rule 23 factors are satisfied for "all issues 13 in this bankruptcy proceeding, including with regard to the Nondischargeability Complaint 14 filed previously" is simply wrong. There are unique facts and circumstances that would 15 defeat class certification and Debtors reserve the right to address each of them if and when 16 the Court determines to apply Bankruptcy Rule 7023, and in turn Rule 23, to any particular 17 proceeding. See In re Ephedra Prod. Liab. Litig., 329 B.R. 1, 5 (S.D.N.Y. 2005) (class 18 certification may be less desirable in bankruptcy than in ordinary civil litigation) (citing In re 19 American Reserve Corp., 840 F.2d 487 (7th Cir. 1988)). 20 /// 21 /// 22 /// 23 ///

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CONCLUSION

1		CONCEDION
2		For the reasons set forth herein, the Hathaway Attorney's Motion should be
3	denied.	
4		DATED this 18th day of February, 2020.
5		TONKON TORP LLP
6		
7		By <u>/s/Timothy J. Conway</u> Timothy J. Conway, OSB No. 851752
8		Ava L. Schoen, OSB No. 044072
9		Attorneys for Debtor B. & J. Property Investments, Inc.
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Tonkon Torp LLP 888 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 1600 Portland, OR 97204

1	CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE		
2 3	I hereby certify that I served the foregoing B. & J. PROPERTY INVESTMENTS, INC.'S OBJECTION TO MOTION AND MEMORANDUM FOR		
	CLASS CERTIFICATION OF HATHAWAY CLASS ACTION CREDITORS on the parties indicated as "ECF" on the attached List of Interested Parties by electronic means		
5	through the Court's Case Management/Electronic Case File system on the date set forth below.		
6	In addition, I served the foregoing on the parties indicated as "Non-ECF" on the attached List of Interested Parties by mailing copies thereof in sealed, first-class postage prepaid envelopes, addressed to the parties' last-known address and depositing in the U.S. mail at Portland, Oregon on the date set forth below.		
7			
8	DATED this 18th day of February, 2020.		
9	TONKON TORP LLP		
10			
11	By /s/ Timothy J. Conway		
12	Timothy J. Conway, OSB No. 851752 Ava L. Schoen, OSB No. 044072		
13	Attorneys for Debtor B. & J. Property Investments, Inc.		
14	038533/00002/10836595v6		
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LIST OF INTERESTED PARTIES

In re B. & J. Property Investments, Inc. U.S. Bankruptcy Court Case No. 19-60138-pcm11

ECF PARTICIPANTS

TIMOTHY J CONWAY on behalf of Debtor B. & J. Property Investments, Inc. tim.conway@tonkon.com, candace.duncan@tonkon.com; spencer.fisher@tonkon.com;

NICHOLAS J HENDERSON on behalf of Interested Party William Berman nhenderson@portlaw.com, tsexton@portlaw.com; mperry@portlaw.com; hendersonnr86571@notify.bestcase.com

KEITH D KARNES on behalf of Creditor Committee Ad Hoc Group of Class Plaintiffs kkarnes@keithkarnes.com, kkarnesnotices@gmail.com; patricia@keithkarnes.com; 9982680420@filings.docketbird.com; 51870@notify.bestcase.com

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US Trustee, Eugene USTPRegion18.EG.ECF@usdoj.gov

NON-ECF PARTICIPANTS

TOP 20 UNSECURED CREDITORS

Class Action Plaintiffs c/o Brady Mertz Brady Mertz PC 345 Lincoln St. Salem, OR 97302

Portland General Electric POB 4438

Portland, OR 97208

Judson's Plumbing POB12669 Salem, OR 97330

City of Salem 555 Liberty St. SE, Room 230 Salem, OR 97301

Comcast Business POB 34744

Seattle, WA 98124-1744

Pacific Source POB 7068

Springfield, OR 97475-0068

Pacific Sanitation POB 17669 Salem, OR 97305

US Bank POB 6352

Fargo, ND 58125-6352

Miller Paint 390 Lancaster Dr. NE Salem, OR 97301

HotSuff Spas & Pool 1840 Lancaster Dr. NE Salem, OR 97305

NW Natural Gas POB 6017 Portland, OR 97228-6017

Chateau Locks 1820 47th Terrace East Bradenton, FL 34203-3773

Century Link Bankruptcy Dept. 600 New Century Parkway New Century, KS 66031

Walter Nelson Company 1270 Commercial St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Statesman Journal 340 Vista Ave. SE Salem, OR 97302

Pacific Screening POB 25582 Portland, OR 97298

DEX Media Dex Media Attn: Client Care 1615 Bluff City Highway Bristol, TN 37620

AllAmerican Insurance POB 758554 Topeka, KS 66675-8554

US Bank POB 6352 Fargo, ND 58125